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In Quest of Health and Happiness

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In Quest of Health and Happiness

BY

THE EUSKAL JAI COMPANY

Author, Joseph M. Hans

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EUSKAL JAI

OR

IN QUEST OF HEALTH AND HAPPINESS

CHAPTER I.

"Just as I expected. It is in keeping with the actions of Ramos since he came into possession of the $10,000 left by his wife's brother.

"Money easily obtained has changed the man from a good neighbor and friend to a harsh creditor and stern master. Even his workmen do not like him as in days gone by."

Thus spoke John Wakefield to his wife as he threw on the table a note he had just received from his erstwhile friendly neighbor, Fernand Ramos.

"Why are you so wroth, John?" said his wife. "Can unwelcome words so disturb you who have ever met trials bravely and borne reverses manfully? This is not like you. What can the note contain that should cause you to display anger?"

"Read, Emma, and judge for yourself," said John, picking up the discarded note and handing it to his wife.

John Wakefield, just past 48, was a magnificent type of the western planter and prospector. He was over six feet tall, broad-shouldered, and strong as the mountain oak. A close inspection would have shown a tinge of gray struggling through his dark hair and closely cropped beard. Twenty years had passed since he left his native home in Scotland and staked a claim, built a house, planted and prospected at Mountainside, Colorado.

A hasty glance at his wife, who was his junior by six years, told the story of a delicate constitution.

She had evidently suffered in her time, but the pleasant smile she constantly carried bespoke the patient, loving, sacrificing wife and mother.

As Mrs. Wakefield read the note her wonted smile disappeared and a pained look took its place. Slowly folding the note she laid it on the table and silently watched the long, heavy stride of her husband, who, with head bent and hands behind him, paced the floor.

Suddenly he stopped and, turning to his wife, said: "Read it to me, Emma. Let me so learn the contents of that paper that I may never have cause to look at it again. What does Ramos say? Can it be true that he will take from us what for twenty years we called our home? Ingratitude is this man's pay to one who aided and helped him when he had need. But read, wife; I will listen attentively."

Mrs. Wakefield slowly unfolded the paper and read as follows:

John Wakefield:

Sir—Three days since, I received your letter in which you asked a renewal of the mortgage on your property. I was in hopes that ere this you would have found some way to pay the debt. There remain six weeks before the time expires, and I can but urge you to take up the mortgage, as I am in need of all available funds for a new enterprise. I cannot under any condition consider a further renewal and trust that on or before June 15th you will have paid the $1,500, with interest since last October. With best wishes for your welfare and a greeting to your daughter, who I learn is home from school, I am

FERNAND RAMOS.

Once more Mrs. Wakefield folded the note and with a suppressed sigh laid it on the table.

"Well, wife," said John, "what think you of Ramos and his wishes? He could have omitted those last words. Things have gone against us since three years. The crops failed once, and a winter's chopping and hauling disappeared with the fire that burned our mill. Now, with little or no prospects in view, Ramos knows his power and evidently intends to use it. You know it was to educate Ella and build that mill that I mortgaged the homestead. Little did we expect that the fates were against us. June would have completed the girl's schooling, but six weeks before the close of the term I was forced to send for her and acquaint her with some of the facts. Poor thing! It almost broke her heart. 'Why did you spend this money for me, father,' were her first words. 'You know I could have been of help to you and mother. Why did you sacrifice for me what you so much needed yourselves?' Ah! Emma, those words were worth more than her education cost, and show the grand character of the girl. But," continued he, speaking almost in a whisper, "here she comes downstairs. Say nothing of this to her at present. She will learn all soon enough, and the sudden termination of her happy school days is a burden sufficiently great."

He had scarcely uttered the last words when the door leading to the sitting-room slowly opened and Ella, with bonnet in hand, announced her intention to take a stroll to the river and view the ruins of the mill.

"Little will you find, Ella, of what but a brief time since promised us so much; but the walk and air will do you good," said her mother.

Nero, the faithful watch-dog, pleased to see his young mistress, had risen from the mat as if to act as guardian and companion.

"Come along, Nero," said Ella, and bidding her parents a pleasant afternoon the girl and dog started across the fields to the small river that marked the boundary of John Wakefield's land.

"Well. Nero," said the girl when they had crossed the stile that separated the orchard from the clover patch, "I fear we are not to have many more tramps like this. Things are all wrong at the house, and it seems your master must soon vacate, and all because of me. Oh! Nero, how I wish you could talk. You seem to understand me when I speak to you, but I cannot tell what you would say. What do you see?"

Away bounded the dog in pursuit of some game. Over boulders, through the underbrush, out again to the open, and finally to the densely timbered wood, gradually losing ground, the dog chased a large jack-rabbit.

"Ah! Nero," said the girl, "you are too big for that sport now; too well fed, faithful dog, to run down a fleet-footed rabbit."

The dog returned soon after, panting heavily and showed by his dejected mien that he had been unequal to the task.

"Well, don't mind, old fellow," said Ella, patting him gently; "I like your company, and am as well pleased you did not capture Jackey."

The dog gave unmistakable signs of his pleasure. The kind voice of his young mistress made him forget his defeat.

The walk was long but refreshing, and were it not for the sad thoughts that ever and anon disturbed her none would have chosen a more pleasant picture. She was of medium height, and well developed; had a mass of waving golden hair and a countenance that bespoke inward peace and happiness. She carelessly carried a parasol over one shoulder in a manner to shade her face, yet to admit of sufficient sunlight to heighten the tints of her cheeks, and set off to great advantage the soft golden ruffle about her neck.

Ella Wakefield was nearing her seventeenth year. She had been pronounced the brightest girl at school. Her

gentle manner and kind disposition had endeared her to teachers and companions. The news of her home-going had caused sorrow and regret at the boarding-school and cast a shadow over the coming closing exercises, in which she was to have taken prominent part.

Reaching the bend in the river where the mill had stood, she was pained at the sight. What a terrible havoc had been committed by the fire! How completely her father's prospects had been wiped away in a few hours! Charred trunks of trees, a few uprights still standing, and a heap of rusted, twisted iron were all that was left of a large saw-mill and thousands of feet of timber which had been cut and hauled during the long winter, and only waited the turning of the ponderous saw to fit it for market.

John Wakefield had carefully figured his profits at $1,800. He wrote Ella at school that when her vacation would come, his debt would have been paid and enough left over to give her and his good wife a pleasant holiday with relatives in Chicago.

Alas! How a few hours of fierce flames changed all. And now how dark seemed her future! Of her father's intentions she had no knowledge; but her faith in him was never greater. He was made of strong Scotch stuff. He might be cast down or fall, but would rise with renewed determination to begin again and conquer. For her mother, she feared the coming shock. The departure from their home might prove a serious, even a fatal, blow.

The day was declining. A cool breeze had set in from the west, and, gathering a few wild flowers, Ella started for home. She had not proceeded far when the notes of a familiar plantation melody were heard in a loud, clear whistle.

Instantly Nero set off in the direction of the sound, but soon returned bounding to his young mistress' side as if to announce a welcome companion.

Gradually ascending a knoll, a young man about twenty

years of age came into full view. A fishing rod was carelessly thrown over his left shoulder, while in his right hand he carried a seine and pouch. No sooner did he see the young lady than his whistling ceased. Ella's first impulse was to hasten her steps so as to avoid a meeting, but a wave of salutation, so familiar to her, caused her to remain stationary. Unwillingly she awaited the now fast approaching young man.

"Welcome home! Pleasant meeting! I was at a loss to understand Nero's excitement. Well, Well! Ella Wakefield, how you have grown? Permit me to compliment and welcome you." Saying which, the young man, who had reached her side, dropped the seine and pouch and held out his hand to her.

Reluctantly she took the hand, and, barely greeting him, she blushed and turned to Nero as if for protection.

"Why, Ella, are you not pleased to see me?" resumed the young man. "Has your last year at school caused you to forget one whose greatest pleasure was that of your company? Have you no word of greeting for Charles Ramos, the one you were wont to call 'Teaser'?"

Without granting the newcomer a look, Ella felt the necessity of an explanation as to the cause of her being so far from home. She told him she had come to see the ruins of the fire which had caused so much harm to her father, and incidentally led to her home-coming from school before the close of the term.

Listening intently to the girl's communication and walking by her side, he was conscious that he was at best but an unwelcome companion. Nevertheless he was anxious to prolong the conversation and learn more. His curiosity had been aroused. Approaching some large boulders, he begged the young lady to rest a few minutes, after which he promised to proceed alone. "For," he said, "I feel I am an intruder."

Brushing the dust from a large stone, he pleaded anew

and was rewarded to see the girl comply. Looking at him for the first time as he took a seat on another large stone almost in front of her, she spoke:

"Our rest must be a brief one."

"Very well," replied Charles, with a smile; "you shall be timekeeper. But why this reserve, Ella? Has some wooer of the great city stolen your thoughts so completely during intervals of music and classics as to make you forget your former companion and champion?

"Not so, Mr. Ramos," said the girl.

"Ha! ha!" laughed Charles. "Mister! I will not be of age for another year, and for the sake of old times let it be Charles."

The girl heeded not the interruption, but continued: "Since last we met, things have changed. Circumstances are altered. I presume you know my father has sustained serious loss. Fate seems to have ruled against him. At noon to-day I overheard a conversation which it may not be proper for me to repeat, but from which I learned much that, alas, is too true. Last year the crops failed. Early spring of this year saw my father's prospects blighted and practically wiped away by the loss of his mill, and I was called home from school before the term was ended, partly because of these adversities. But the worst is that my father will be unable to meet a certain urgent demand. He is unnerved; mother is ill, and I am wretched."

"Say not so," replied the young man, consolingly. "Your father is made of material that cannot easily be disturbed. I am grieved to learn that your good mother is ill and you wretched, to use your own words. I did not know your father was under obligations to anyone; and if it be so, do you thinks he has no friends? Where do you place my father? He certainly would not let John Wakefield suffer if he knew he was in want. Tell me more, Ella—but wait," he continued, pointing to the ground. "What is this you are digging up with your parasol?

Why that looks like the yellow metal," said he, picking up and carefully examining three or four small pieces of broken rock thus accidentally unearthed.

"I may be mistaken, but I think our short rest has brought some good. Time will tell." Saying which, he carelessly threw the pebbles into his pouch and continued: "May I learn more of what has caused you to be wretched? My curiosity has been aroused, and I may as well admit that my desire to be of some possible service to your father and you compels me to ask a further confidence."

The girl hesitated for some time. She seemed to debate the propriety of further disclosures. From what the young man had said she knew he was ignorant of the recent action of his father, but as Charles pressed the conversation, she answered:

"To say more grieves me, and I fear that a knowledge of certain facts can do little good and possibly great harm. But if I acquaint you with what I thought you already knew, you must consider it a final communication. When I bid you good-bye to-day it must mark the parting of our ways for once and all."

The earnestness with which this was said left no doubt of the girl's intentions.

"If imparting something to me be so serious," said Charles, "as to estrange us, I beg you to forego the telling. Only yesterday my father decided, notwithstanding my strenuous objections, that I must spend a year or two in Europe. My health has not been the best of late. The lack of a mother's care since my fifth year has not made me the rugged, strong person this mountain air should naturally produce, and now, above all, when I am to depart, let not the reflection of my happy days and pleasant surroundings be embittered by a sad parting—one which you would have me consider as final. Rather keep me ignorant, but do not deny me the satisfaction that, even if separated, I may look forward to a time of

home-coming and a welcome from those that I have associated with, particularly one that I now esteem and love more than ever."

"It must not be, Charles," replied the girl. "You must forget me and the past. What I would say must sooner or later be known to you, and time cannot alter the outcome. Therefore I repeat, though it pains me to say it, from this day you and yours, I and mine, part." Her tone implied positive decision. "Three years ago my father became indebted to Mr. Ramos. A mortgage was placed on what we proudly called our humble home. That mortgage will soon be due but cannot be met. Your father insists upon its payment or he will force a foreclosure."

Charles jumped to his feet. Consternation was depicted on his countenance. This was indeed news to him. He grew pale; his voice trembled as he slowly replied: "I did not know this before. But rest assured my father is not the hard-hearted man John Wakefield may think him. I shall have a talk with him to-night, and until then I can but beg you to withhold your judgment and trust in me. Adios!"

Ella held out her hand for a final good-bye. Hastily taking up the pole, seine and pouch, and politely raising his hat, Charles said: "No, Ella Wakefield, I shall not bid you farewell! Good day! or rather, good evening, for the sun is sinking fast, and you are quite a distance from home; but to say farewell, never!" And casting his eyes to the ground, he hastened away.

Slowly rising, and feeling guilty for having divulged what should be considered a secret, Ella started homeward.

"Come, Nero!" said she, speaking to the dog; "we have been away too long and mother may be worried."

Peace and quiet reigned in the Wakefield homestead. Her father was busy tending to some chores, and Mrs. Wakefield was occupied in writing a letter. This was a sur-

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prise to Ella, as she well knew that was a task her mother had not attempted in years, unless by way of sending kind words and advice to her daughter while at school.

CHAPTER II.

The house of Fernand Ramos was of modern construction and well furnished. Ever since his wife's death, fifteen years before, its care was left to Mandy, a faithful colored woman, who had been in the service of the family since they settled at Mountainside.

Flushed from his rapid walk, and with a look of disappointment, Charles entered the large main room that answered for library and reception, and in the warm summer days for dining-room as well. His father sat poring over some manuscripts. At the entrance of his son the elder Ramos carefully folded the papers, and tying them with a ribbon, locked them in a tin box which he placed in a drawer of his secretary. Then drawing from a pocket of his coat a time table, which he spread on the table, he turned to his son and said:

"Well, Charles, what luck had you to-day?"

"As for catching fish," replied the son, "no luck at all. The season is not advanced enough. However, father, I had some luck on the way home; for I met a most charming and fascinating young lady, and likewise made a find, or, as you prospectors would say, a strike!"

"You interest me," replied the father. "Tell me something of your various lucks, as you are pleased to term them. But first as to the fascinating and charming young lady. Can there be such an one in our settlement?"

The son answered: "At present, yes! How long she is to remain depends upon circumstances over which, father, I think you may have some influence."

"I have influence?" asked the father.

"Yes," replied Charles; "but of that let us speak later. On my way home I chanced to pick up a few pebbles near the large boulders on Mr. Wakefield's pasture, and I wish you would give me an opinion as to their worth, for, if I am not greatly mistaken, they contain ore;" saying which, he handed his father two of the samples in his possession and closely watched the scrutiny.

A smile that seemed forced was the first response, and with a "Where did you say you found the dirt?" carelessly threw them into the open grate.

"I picked them up on John Wakefield's land, near the large boulders, and from what little experience I have had I concluded that they contained ore—real gold ore."

"It is well you say from your little experience," continued the elder Ramos, "and for this I must forgive you; else you should know that after due and careful prospecting in this locality for years not a sign of the precious metal has ever been found. I might add that John Wakefield, one of the oldest and best prospectors in this part of Colorado, would not let such a chance find fall to the lot of an inexperienced fisher lad."

Here the elder Ramos broke out into a harsh laugh. Charles winced, but said nothing.

Taking a seat, Mr. Ramos resumed his former stern look and continued:

"Don't think any more of them, Charles. They contain absolutely nothing of value; besides, if there was gold on Wakefield's property, do you think he would let it pass from him without an effort to save it?"

"I understand what you would imply," answered the son. "Until an hour ago I was not aware of the fact that Mr. Wakefield had mortgaged his property and that you are the holder of the deed."

The elder Ramos looked at his son in surprise. "And who may have imparted to you this information? This

is my business alone; if it was of concern to you I would ere this have acquainted you thereof."

Charles hesitated for a moment, but answered. "The young lady I met on my way home was the one that told me—Miss Wakefield, just returned from school. As to the mortgage being a matter between you and Mr. Wakefield I will not venture to gainsay, yet I trust you will not deny me an opinion."

"I cannot be master of your thoughts or ideas," said the father, "but when I need your opinion on a matter that concerns me only, I will find time and opportunity to ask it.

"When I urged for your good that you go abroad, you strenuously objected, but, as you well know, without effect. Even now I have written and engaged passage from New York for Saturday after next. When I repeat that it is necessary, and pronounced as such by Doctor Wade, you will understand that a further objection will displease me greatly. Your welfare and health are my greatest concerns. The trip and sojourn for two or three years on the other side will make a strong and healthy man of you."

"Let us hope so," meekly replied the son, "and may your best wishes be realized."

"Regarding the mortgage," said Mr. Ramos, "I will enlighten you as to certain facts.

"Three years ago John Wakefield concluded that nothing less than a grand education would fit his daughter for a life in this sparsely settled colony." A look of scorn appeared on his face. "Finances were not the best with Wakefield at the time. He came to me, as he said, for counsel and aid. I did my utmost to dissuade him, all to no effect. He knew I had money, and he was in need of some. I offered him a three years' loan of $500 at 6 per cent. without any security. He rejected it, though it was made in good faith and for the sake of friendship.

Instead, he asked a loan of $1,500, and insisted that I take a two years' mortgage on his property, which he valued at $3,000. I knew it was an over-valuation, but was willing to humor him. Wakefield had visions of what he could do with the extra money.

"He would build a saw-mill, cut and market his timber, and in two years be out of debt. Again I tried to convince him of the almost impossibility of the project, but he persisted. The mortgage was drawn and recorded. At the expiration of the two years he was not any better off. Ella was getting a fine education, as he said, but the crop failure put him back. He pleaded a renewal of one year; again I granted his request. The saw-mill became a fact; but hardly was it completed when fire destroyed all. What is left me but the property? I have written him regarding this matter, and notified him that at the expiration of the time (six weeks hence) I must have the $1,500 with interest since October last, or I will be obliged to foreclose."

"And do you mean to carry out your threat?" asked Charles.

"Call it not such, lad. This is a matter of business, and any further delay cannot change it. Wakefield's resources are few while he remains on the land, and my prospects of a settlement in time are as good as lost. Let us drop this matter and prepare for your departure."

It would be impossible to describe the pain these words caused the young man. His pleadings with his father were all for naught. For the first time in his life he left his father's presence grieved, disgusted, broken in spirit as well as in health. When alone in his room he resolved to—but of his resolutions we may learn later.

CHAPTER III.

While this interview between father and son was being held in the Ramos house, a different one was taking place in the Wakefield home between father, mother and daughter.

During a long and serious talk the father took occasion to communicate the true and complete state of affairs to his daughter and the conclusions he and his wife had arrived at, namely, to gather their small possessions and go to Chicago, where he hoped to make a new start, and was confident of being able to keep the wolf from the door.

Ella humbly confessed to having unintentionally overheard a part of the conversation at noon, before she left for her walk; and how, in her distress, she communicated her knowledge to Mr. Charles Ramos, whom she accidentally met. She told her parents of Charles' surprise and deep grief; how he promised to plead with his father in their behalf, and of her confidence in his ultimate success.

Mr. Wakefield did not chide his daughter for what she had done, but replied: "It were better nothing had been communicated to the young man, for his efforts with the elder Ramos will prove unavailing. I know him well enough to be convinced of his determination when once he sets about adding to his wealth.

"However," he continued, "it seems fate is against us and we must lose no time in idle speculation. Two weeks from to-day, as decided, I shall leave a note for Fernand Ramos at the station and we will bid Mountainside a farewell."

Little was said during the evening meal, and soon after Ella, bidding her parents a good-evening, retired about and tried to quiet her thoughts. True, she had known Charles Ramos since infancy; she had played with him and always looked upon him as a brother; but now, what was it? Why was her heart so disquieted? He

said a year had changed her; she knew it was so, but the change affected her in more ways than one. He said he esteemed and loved her more than ever. Loved! It was the first time she had even been spoken to in such a manner by any but her parents, and she—oh! Why would her heart not be quiet? Why was she restless? Why could she not woo sleep and peace? She feared to answer her own promptings, and with renewed efforts to obtain some rest she finally succeeded in leaving with the past her experiences of this eventful day. When her mother's voice wakened her, it seemed as if she had but just closed her eyes.

After her morning meal, and while inspecting some early plants that had lately made their appearance, she was accosted by Jim, Mr. Ramos' brother-in-law and head man.

"Good-morning, Miss Wakefield! I have a note for you, to which, if you please, I am asked to bring an answer. Will you kindly favor me?"

Ella hastily opened the sealed note and read:

"My dear Friend: All pleadings with my father have proved fruitless. I leave Mountainside to-morrow for New York to take passage to Europe.

"May I be favored with one more short interview? I have formed a resolution, and I wish your approval, and likewise a word from you to cheer me on my way.

"Kindly grant this last request before I go, and believe me ever, Your most faithful and devoted

"Charles Ramos."

Bidding Jim to pardon her a few moments, she entered the house in quest of her father, to whom she confided the message. Soon after she returned, and handing him a note, said:

"Remember me kindly to Mr. Charles and give him this."

The reply read as follows:

"Dear Sir and Friend: After consulting my father, I am constrained to forego another meeting. I wish you a most pleasant journey and earnestly hope you will return in the best of health. Do not make any rash resolution, or, if you have done so, do not keep it. You have my best wishes as well as those of my father and mother. Let us hope we may meet at some future time and under more favorable circumstances. I promise a lasting remembrance. Sincerely, Ella Wakefield."

To say Charles was disappointed would but mildly express his feelings. "What is there to do?" he soliloquized. "I go to-morrow, and possibly they, too, must soon leave Mountainside. Shall we ever meet? Time must be our guardian. God grant that when I return I may find that Ella has kept faithfully her promise of constant remembrance."

The day following, at nine o'clock, Mr. Ramos and son were seen driving to the little station distant about one mile.

The young man cast searching glances in the direction of the Wakefield home, but saw no one.

His departure, however, was eagerly watched by the occupants of the house.

John Wakefield, addressing his wife and daughter after a prolonged silence, said: "One thing is certain; there is good stuff in that lad. He is somewhat inexperienced, but I know him from infancy and can safely say there is no guile in him. He does not possess any of the cold avariciousness of his father. Let us wish him well. If he is in quest of health and happiness, may he find both. Soon we, too, will leave this neighborhood, but I fear we will have to foot it to the station."

Two weeks later saw the fulfilment of these words, as, with grieved hearts, the family bid farewell to Mountainside and their once loved and cherished home.

CHAPTER IV.

During the long and uneventful journey to the great metropolis Charles Ramos had ample time for reflection. He seemed as one lost in a great world. He was to face new peoples, and look for health and possibly happiness in foreign lands. Health he would certainly try to procure; as for happiness, he felt he was journeying away from it each day. Was not the main source of his real happiness in Mountainside? Ever and anon he reflected on his resolve: To look upon himself as an outcast; to depend, if possible, on his own resources; to try and forget his home and old surroundings, if possible, even his father, because of his harsh treatment of those dear to him. He would strive to his utmost to make amends for the wrongs of a Ramos. It would take time; but he well knew that eventually he would acquire a share of the estate, and with what he might save he hoped to make some restitution. Was there rashness in this resolution? He could not see it, and felt that Ella could find no fault with his intentions if she could learn them.

Determination was a characteristic trait of son as well as father. He would carry out his intention and he would live and strive with that end alone in view.

A day's rest and sightseeing in the city of Chicago created new desires. The immensity of the city, its large buildings and beautiful parks, interested him greatly. Comparisons with what he had seen further west were not to be made. He looked, and looked, and simply wondered. Could the Old World, beyond the Atlantic, surpass this? But he would soon learn. He had heard much of Chicago and New York, and his wildest imaginations had not proved exaggerations. Two days would bring him to New York and his first care would be to submit for examination some of the samples of rock he had secretly carried from the Wakefield farm.

The expansive prairie lands, the great corn and wheat fields of Illinois, Indiana and Ohio were feasts for his eager sight; and the immensity of the Great Lakes increased his love and wonder for the land of his birth and home.

New York! At last! How try to describe his impressions. Here he felt for the first time the real loneliness of his position. He had laughed at being told of the possibility of being lost in the great city, but the bewildering mass of cars and trucks, the thousands of pedestrians, all rushing to and fro; the lofty buildings and elevated roads, made a most profound impression on the young man, and created a sort of homesickness.

How he wished to be back in Mountainside! Here was no one he knew. There was his all. But he calmly reflected: "This is but the beginning."

Making inquiry, he was directed to a noted assayer's office and submitted his small samples. A careful examination and assay convinced him of the value of the find, and with a lighter heart he looked to the future.

The following day would find him at sea, leaving his country and his friends. He had little difficulty in reaching the pier where the "Monserrat" was docked. The numerous ships and docks, the loading and unloading of the great steamers, were sources of more wonder. Securing his room and baggage, he decided to seek a rest from his many distractions in his small room at the hotel where he stopped the previous night.

Saturday was a glorious day. He sauntered to the steamer and selected a place that would insure him the best view of the city he was to leave in another hour.

"The world was great, and he had far to roam;
But one place he sighed for, and that was home."

The "Monserrat" was a large and good steamer. He had read of it in the news of his own town as the "Phantom Boat" that had on two occasions, once at Cienfuegos

and again at Matanzas, evaded the patrolling and blockading ships of Sampson's fleet during the recent Spanish-American war. He looked upon her as a lucky boat and considered the selection a fortunate one and an omen of success. He was well provided and had letters of introduction to relatives and friends at Madrid and Seville. He knew he would land in northern Spain, but he pictured his tours through the provinces once dominated by the Moors, and already imagined himself viewing the great castles of the Alhambra so graphically described by his favorite author, Washington Irving. The voyage was uneventful, the weather fine, and he suffered but little from seasickness, the dread of most ocean travelers, especially on their first trip.

Eight days after leaving New York the bold headlands of Spain's western shores came into view. A few hours later he was pleased to feel he was again on terra firma. The sight of the Pyrenees towering away to great heights brought back fond recollections of his own Rockies. But how different the climate! Here the air was balmy and he felt it possessed health.

CHAPTER V.

Charles Ramos had not been a week at Barcelona before he became convinced of the wisdom of his father in sending him abroad. His journey to northern Spain was a revelation. The salubrious climate and health-laden atmosphere, so famous to travelers in the Cantabrian regions, soon influenced the young man's spirits.

Arrived at the town of Eibar, which place had been recommended to him, he soon found pleasant quarters with an old Spanish couple who had a large, airy room facing a beautiful garden to spare, and which for a moderate consideration they placed at his disposal.

A few weeks of quiet and rest would give him time to plan for the future. During the first week he spent a great deal of his time in walks and visiting the great churches and places of note. In most of these promenades his attention was attracted to the great interest displayed by young and old in, as far as he could see, the only sport or game.

The vacant grounds surrounding many of the buildings whose walls offered free space were devoted to games of ball. The enthusiastic crowds congregated about these games, made up of all classes of people, surprised the young man. At one place in particular, on the outskirts of Eibar, where a large, high wall had been erected and a court laid out, he was surprised at the deep interest displayed by the great throngs that had gathered around four young contestants. His curiosity was aroused and, drawing near, he also became an interested spectator.

The peculiarly shaped paddle fastened to the right wrist and hand called for close inspection. The manner in which those lads delivered and received the ball, the wonderful agility displayed, the speed with which plays were executed, simply astounded him.

He had been an active boy in his own town when on the ball team and had been classed as very quick and accurate in play. He knew what qualities were required to make a good player in his national sport; but such lightning-like strokes, bounds and plays were strange to him and surprised him to such a degree that he became anxious to learn the secret of such requirements.

To a young man of about his own age who stood near him applauding the good plays, he confessed his ignorance; announcing himself a stranger, and asked an explanation of the game, its methods of play, the manner in which so many became such experts, etc. Finding a most willing listener in Charles, the young Spaniard volunteered that as soon as the contest then going on would be over to

accompany him in his walk for a brief time and tell him what he knew of the great Spanish game of "pelota," familiarly known in this locality as "Viscayan pelota."

As soon as the contest finished and the young victors had received rounds of applause, the crowds dispersed and the Spaniard plunged at once into the subject in a manner that both amused and interested Charles. The earnestness and spirit with which he tried to show the superiority of this sport to all others, not excepting the national games of other countries, and of which he possessed a clear knowledge, awakened new and eager desires in the mind of young Ramos.

"This great and (pardon me, if I say) only great game of pelota antedates the Christian era. It was known, though in a somewhat crude form, to the Dorians in Greece, to the Latins, Etruscans and Samnites in Italy, and to the Celts in Spain and other European countries. When America was discovered the Spaniards found the sport established among tribes of Mexico, Central and South Americas. At first, like all sports and arts, it was rough and crude, but was improved later until it became the exclusive privilege of kings and nobles.

"It had acquired great importance in the fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Within the last twenty years it has reached its perfection. The old methods of the bare hand or the paddle and glove have been supplanted by the narrow basket. The old walls or ramparts have been superseded by lofty, elegant buildings called 'fronton vasco,' where the exhibitions rival and outclass the ancient Roman festivals, or the Olympic games of Greece.

"It is familiar to every native lad from the time he leaves his mother's knee.

"To me in particular has the game great attraction and fascination. I became an adept at an early age. As a boy my health had been feeble, and at one time my

parents despaired of my life. I was taken from school in southern Spain and sent to the province of Viscaya, where it was said the healthy mountain air, tempered by the balmy breezes of the Cantabrian shores, alone could save me. It is here in these northern provinces that the game is played to perfection. Though weak and timid, I had ever a great inclination for play, especially such as put to test my cleverness and powers of speed. I soon became wrapped up in the game of pelota and whenever a contest was being held among the schoolboys or young men I was sure to be one of the players or referees. I made rapid strides and my health came, as it were, in bounds like the ball returning from the fronton.

"My muscles gradually hardened like iron and the strength I soon acquired surprised me. Within one year I was sought after. At sixteen years of age I was pitted against some well-known players and accredited myself with honors. At eighteen I played my first professional game and came off the victor. From that date, four years ago, I have been engaged to play in most of the cities of Spain and France. Next Monday I am booked to play before His Royal Highness at his summer home in beautiful San Sebastian."

So interested were the two young men, the one in propounding and explaining the game, the other in listening and formulating plans for the future, that they had reached the street where the young Spaniard lived before he was aware of it. It was but a short distance to the house at which he was stopping, and he invited Charles to visit him and rest a few minutes.

The request was complied with readily, as Charles felt drawn to the young man whose past early history read like a chapter taken from his own life. The room was spacious, well lighted and ventilated. Two small oriental rugs of very pretty pattern were spread on the floor. A large rocker, an armchair, a bed and writing desk con-

stituted the furniture. Everything was in perfect order and scrupulously clean. The walls were hung with swords and miniature flags of various nations. Prominent among them was the Stars and Stripes, at sight of which Charles' face beamed with joy. Interspersed with these were pictures of prominent players, paddles of various makes and values used in the sport.

"These are my quarters while at Eibar," said the young Spaniard, offering Charles a chair. "My name is Marcos Navarette. These," pointing to the wall, "are trophies won in many contests; for, be it known, I have handled the sword and shield as well.

"Your general bearing would indicate an American, though you speak the Spanish fluently, and if my observation plays me not false, I should say you came from the United States. Am I correct?"

"You have guessed correctly," replied Charles, "and I must apologize for not acquainting you sooner with my name and intentions; but the eloquent manner in which you treated the subject of your sport claimed my attention so completely that I had no desire to interrupt. I am of Spanish descent and learned the language from infancy. I was born in the western part of the United States where the great Rocky Mountains lift their peaks to the clouds. Ramos is my name; Charles, or, if you prefer, and as my mother used to call me, Carlos Ramos.

"A year hence I hope to attain my majority. Like you, but later in life, I have been sent to this beautiful climate in quest of health. Your brief history has filled me with hopes, and I trust that my stay in these provinces may conduce to health and a strong constitution. I am greatly indebted to you for a most pleasant afternoon, and for information that may prove beneficial to me, for it is my earnest desire, if I can so arrange, to learn the merits of your beautiful game. I shall lose no time in securing a tutor and opportunities for practice."

Marcos arose and, holding out his hand to Carlos, said: "A teacher is readily found; he stands before you, and I promise that opportunities will present themselves as rapidly as your progress will warrant. I have made few friends during my professional career, but I feel that a mutual friendship exists between us now that will be strengthened as we learn more of each other.

"When will you begin? I leave next Monday for San Sebastian. There remain five days for instruction and practice, and when I return I will be pleased to take further charge."

Carlos was so taken by surprise at the magnanimous offer and the warmth of the young man's friendship that his attempt to express his gratitude was nigh a failure.

Marcos gave him no time to collect his thoughts, but continued: "Meet me here at nine o'clock to-morrow. I will take you to a good court and begin your instruction, which I trust will prove beneficial to you and a real pleasure to me."

When Carlos expressed his desire to arrange for a compensation, his friend held up his hands to forbid him and said:

"Your health and happiness shall be my compensation for six months; after that you may dictate to your pleasure."

Promising to be on hand at the appointed hour the next day, Carlos bid his kind friend a pleasant evening and started for his own quarters, happy in spirit and conscious of company that would not allow his stay at Eibar to become monotonous or lonesome.

CHAPTER VI.

On reaching his room, Carlos set about answering the first and only letter he had received from home. It had

been sent to Barcelona and forwarded. He felt it his duty to inform his father of his safe arrival.

It was a cold, matter-of-fact letter he had received and the reply was similar. He related his experience from the time he left home until he arrived at Barcelona. Of his subsequent acts and intentions he said nothing and closed his letter as follows: "I can make you no promise as to when I shall write again. I feel as one cast adrift and cut off from those dear to me. I shall try to find health and possibly some happiness. I have drawn the money you sent me and I desire that you send me no more. If I ever find myself in need I may call for aid, but if I can carry out my intentions I am sure not to prove a burden to you in the future. Should your charity move you or your conscience trouble you, may I suggest to make amends to those you may have, ere this, forced into want? Until you learn from me again, consider me as one in quest of health and happiness. Your son, Charles."

Promptly at the time appointed, young Ramos called on his companion, and together they journeyed to the court selected. An hour was to be devoted to practice each morning and afternoon.

Carlos entered with zest into the exercise and soon displayed tact and improvement that greatly surprised and pleased the young Spaniard.

At the end of the fifth day his tutor complimented him warmly and pronounced him a most successful pupil. "If you continue to improve in the same ratio, I predict a great future for you," said Marcos.

Carlos promised to practice faithfully every day during the absence of his companion and arranged to enter several games with amateurs who frequently called at the court for practice.

Marcos' engagement at San Sebastian was to extend over a period of two weeks at least. During his absence

he wrote Carlos of his happenings and success and concluded with some excellent advice.

During this time the young American continued to practice and improve to a degree that filled him with confidence. A week had elapsed when he received his first challenge. Modestly, yet confident in his ability to hold his own, he accepted. During the contest his activity and powers of endurance were repeatedly put to severe test.

Frequently he was loudly applauded and heard words of praise and commendation. He was conscious of having made several difficult plays, thanks to his good instructor and the manner in which he calculated each move as well as the plays of his competitor.

That night he wrote to his friend:

"To-day I met my first opponent, a worthy fellow. I am overjoyed to tell you I came out of the contest a victor by four points. The applause would have been a great pleasure to you, as it certainly filled me with hopes for the future. I was complimented by many whose praise I fear savored of flattery. Immediately after the game I was challenged for to-morrow and the day following. I am growing so nimble, agile and strong that if you remain away much longer I shall be compelled to send you a challenge. My health is excellent, but to-night I am tired and will retire early. I count the hours that you are absent. Frequently do I receive invitations to visit players at their home, but I have declined all, deciding to await your return and further instructions. I learn by the papers that you are creating a great name for yourself and affording excellent pastime and amusement to His Royal Highness and family.

"Have a care to not overwork yourself in your anxiety to win laurels. I sometimes think an occasional defeat does a great deal of good. Expectantly, your pupil,

"Carlos Ramos."

The days following were happy ones for Carlos. If

Ella Wakefield could see him, now serving the ball with the rapidity of a lightning flash—now bounding and leaping like a well-trained animal, defeating good players at their own game. How his heart swelled with just pride!

Carlos had participated in five match games so far, and had been declared victor four times; the last was a contest of four, in which he and a young Spaniard defeated two players whose reputation had been established. This victory was won by one point only, but that was sufficient to create a name.

The following Tuesday Marcos arrived in high spirits. He had many decorations and presents and had added handsomely to his bank account.

"What is this I hear of you?" he asked, when alone with Carlos. "If what people say be true, you have made great strides and are fast acquiring an enviable reputation.

"I am sorry to say my stay at Eibar will be brief. Before leaving San Sebastian I closed a contract extending over a period of three months and calling for a circuit of the following cities: Bilbao, San Sebastian, Vittoria, Barcelona and Madrid, with possibly some places in southern France.

"I regret to say this will necessarily prevent me carrying out my original intention and desire, viz.: to spend a long time in your company. However, as my contract does not go into effect for one month, we will have some time in which to enjoy ourselves and afford you good training.

"Owing to an accident in the last game at San Sebastian, the player who was to be my partner in several contests is *hors de combat*, and I am anxiously awaiting information from the management relative to a substitute. In the meantime we must lose no opportunity to season your muscles and put to test your best powers, for I believe that some day you will be heard from in connection with our glorious game of pelota."

Carlos replied: "I shall be guided by your advice and training and can only promise to try and meet your approval. If you are sufficiently rested to-morrow afternoon, I beg your attendance at a game I am to play with a new arrival who is, I am informed, a player of some note. Do not fail to favor me with your advice as well as your honest criticism. I trust you will be convinced I have not forgotten your good instruction, but made progress during your absence."

Marcos promised to be present and cautioned Carlos to retire early and seek good rest.

The following day was an ideal one, even for that exceptional locality and climate. The contest had been well advertised and long before the time set for play the fronton was well filled. From the many favorable comments passed it was seen that the young American had made enthusiastic friends.

When time for play was called, Carlos hastily shook hands with his instructor, with whom he had been in deep and earnest conversation, and took his place on the court.

Marcos was surprised at the calmness exhibited by his companion. Confidence was pictured on his countenance. He bowed in acknowledgment of the salutations showered upon him by a host of admirers, and entered into the game as if intent on practice rather than a contest where defeat would rob him of the encomiums so recently won, and victory meant a higher standing in the estimation of those present.

Marcos considered it a sort of injustice to his friend to be matched against this newcomer who had achieved honors in many a hard battle. He drew some consolation from the remarks of Carlos when writing to him at San Sebastian, viz.: "An occasional defeat does a great deal of good at times."

He drew the letter from his pocket and resolved that when the game would be at an end he would confine his

criticism to asking his companion to read the words of a wise person and place before him his own reflection on an occasional defeat.

The game was on! It was clear from the onset that these were no ordinary players. None would now class Carlos as a beginner. Marcos jumped to his feet in an instant, and quickly thrust the open letter into his pocket. He could scarcely realize what was taking place before him. The audience was delighted. All were witnessing a rare exhibition of art and skill. There were numerous brilliant plays that aroused the spectators to unusual applause. "Ramos! Ramos!" was heard from all quarters. A marvelous play by Carlos, one seldom witnessed and executed with the dexterity and cleverness of an expert, produced unbounded enthusiasm. Again and again Ramos heard his name echoed from wall to wall. He had made many friends to-day, but that which pleased him most was the "Bravo! Ramos!" shouted by his companion loud and clear above the din of voices.

The plays were so rapid and the skill displayed so unremitting that when the game was but half over an intermission was demanded by the people. Carlos had fifteen points to his credit; his adversary only twelve.

Marcos threw his arms about the neck of his companion and hugged him as a long absent lover would enthuse over his betrothed. The prolonged shouts and hand clapping sounded as sweet music to Carlos; yet a sigh escaped him. That instant his thoughts were far away. They were transplanted to the little settlement of Mountainside and to Ella Wakefield. Oh! if she could only see this pandemonium and know it was all for him, and that at that moment she was uppermost in his thoughts!

Play was resumed after a brief rest. Determined to recover what he had so unexpectedly lost, the Spaniard exerted himself to his utmost. He was conscious of a most

worthy antagonist who was fast taking from him his laurels.

Alas! Fate seemed against him. Each new play was met by an equally good or better one on the part of the young American. Again and again Carlos exhibited skill that was astounding. He fairly reveled in the sport and occasionally performed some master stroke that was foreign even to his famous tutor. Refusing to accept a chance when his adversary accidentally slipped, evoked new and rousing cheers.

It would be impossible to describe the scene when, with a masterly play that drove the ball beyond the reach of his opponent, he scored the final point. Again the spectators broke forth in tumultuous applause. Bouquets and mementoes were showered upon the young victor as he was carried away on the shoulders of his many and devoted friends.

Crestfallen in his defeat, with only twenty-four points to his credit, while Carlos had scored thirty, the Spaniard forced his way to his opponent when an opportunity offered and, grasping his hand, said: "You have wrested from me honors and much that I had won in many a hard fought contest. I bear you no ill-will and am consoled to know that I have never had a nobler or more worthy and gentlemanly opponent."

That night Marcos Navarrete dispatched in haste a letter to the management that had engaged him, and who were in a dilemma to secure another first-class player. He wrote: "Do not worry or trouble yourselves further. I have just discovered a sort of wonder and you cannot do better than send him a contract and secure him at once. I will risk my salary on his ability and would advise you to secure his signature without any loss of time. Name: Carlos Ramos. Address: Eibar.

MARCOS NAVARETTE."

CHAPTER VII.

Summer had passed. The hills about Mountainside were rich with the varied tints of autumn. The little town had grown like magic since John Wakefield had left it in May. Gold had been found on the Ramos property; a mine was already in operation and Jim, the overseer, was kept busy. Prospectors and gold seekers had come from far and near; and rude huts and camps were visible on all sides.

As yet the strikes or finds were confined to a narrow belt which lay mostly in the Ramos territory and was lost at the river. A shaft had been sunk near where the boulders lay and rock was being blasted and crushed which yielded rich pay. Ramos bid fair to soon become a very wealthy man, but his would be a case of wealth without happiness.

Excepting a very narrow vein which extended to his own original lands, the main body of ore lay on and through the property acquired from Wakefield.

The brief letter he had received from his son told him little he cared to learn, but added to his wretchedness. He wrote to friends in Spain in hope of reaching his son, but no news of the latter could be had. He had even lost all information of Wakefield and his family. At one time he wrote him to the address left with the lone station master. He did not acquaint Wakefield of his fortunate discovery of gold, but told him that his interests had increased very rapidly of late. He offered him a place and promised him good wages to come and help manage his lands. The letter reached Mr. Wakefield at Chicago, where he had, through influence of friends, secured employment as foreman in a large grain elevator.

When John Wakefield read that letter he was very wroth. He did not show it to his wife or Ella, but returned it with a few words as follows: "This is insult added to injury. I bear you no ill-will, though you de-

prived me of my all. You would now lord it over me and gloat in your mastery. I want none of your gifts or places. Do me the favor to never write me again. If you do I shall consign your letter to the fire unopened."

Ramos was not liked in Mountainside. He tried to win favor by acts that ordinarily would have called for praise or gratitude, but it was an open secret that he had forced his once good friend, honest John Wakefield, to quit the settlement and, as many said, stole his property.

Was not the gold he was mining taken from the land he seized? Some even intimated that he drove his son from home because he would not consent to be a sharer in the ill-gotten goods.

At the town election for mayor he was defeated by the very people he employed. His health was not the best lately, yet he could not leave Mountainside, owing to his many and large cares.

With rapidly increasing wealth, Fernand Ramos was a stranger to happiness. The seasons of labor followed one another for two years, during which time he had added considerable to his wealth, but in all this time, strive as he would, he could learn nothing of his son. He might be in dire need for all he knew; aye, he might have long since succumbed to want and perished among strangers. He felt guilty in a measure for his son's conduct. He had treated his pleadings with contempt, and he well knew that determination was a characteristic trait of Charles; that if he once formed a resolution he would undoubtedly carry it out.

How often had he not read the only note received from him! Did not his son tell him in as many words that they had parted for once and all? Little did the elder Ramos dream that his son Charles was at that very time winning fame under an assumed name, travelling through Spain and France; spending a vacation in Switzerland, another in Italy; visiting South America and Mexico as

a professional player, and as one who had found health and partial happiness in an avocation practically unknown to the remote sections of western America, and had only recently been brought to the attention of some of the Eastern cities.

He had advertised lately in the papers of Madrid and Paris, but Mr. Charles Ramos was unknown. The real Charles was lost, and in his stead a Carlos Somar was a hero where Spanish pelota was a pastime.

Mr. Ramos decided to arrange for a trip abroad the following summer in search of his son, and confided the management of his industries and mines, that were in excellent condition, to his brother-in-law Jim. But here again was he doomed to disappointment. His intentions were never carried out. During the winter he contracted a severe cold which was followed in spring by a protracted illness, culminating in a fever that proved fatal in May, just three years subsequent to the time he bid his son good-bye at the station in Mountainside.

Work was stopped at the mine pending a search for a will and the lost heir. Weeks passed into months, but no trace of either could be had. If Charles lived it seemed inexplicable that he did not put in an appearance. Jim was a most conscientious man; he instituted diligent search and advertised in the leading papers of Europe and America. News of Mr. Ramos' death and the inquiry for Charles were read by Mrs. Wakefield and her daughter. It was the first Ella had learned of Charles since he left home. It told her little, but she now knew he had never been home since he first departed; and, what was more, his own people were ignorant of his whereabouts. Had Charles, after all, formed some rash resolution and carried it out? She knew him too well to think he would do harm to himself or another, but this silence to such world-wide inquiries seemed strange to her, unless he had passed away or met accident and death unknown. How her heart beat!

Silently she offered a prayer for his protection and safe home-coming to his own, should he still be among the living.

Again had summer passed; once more the autumn tints made Mountainside look beautiful. It was early in October that the quiet town was wakened and stirred in an unusual manner by the news which appeared in the Weekly Mining Journal, viz.: The son and heir of Fernand Ramos was on his way to the West to take hold where his father had left off.

CHAPTER VIII.

It was about the middle of August that Carlos, in response to a letter, journeyed to the capital of Spain. He had carefully studied the contents and offers that the management, on the advice of Marcos Navarrete, had made. To him it meant three months of earnest work, but the recompense was commensurate with the undertaking.

When alone with Marcos the day following his great victory he was apprised of his friend's step in his behalf and he felt in duty bound to comply. The praise and high compliments bestowed upon him by one who knew whereof he spoke dispelled all doubts as to his ability to give complete satisfaction in the role of a professional.

His funds could not last indefinitely, and his resolve to depend upon his own resources prompted him to reply in person to the officers of the company.

The interview proved most satisfactory to both parties and Carlos affixed to the contract the name Carlos Somar, by which he wished to be known in professional life; an undertaking that was to launch him in a new career and bind him stronger to his loyal friend, who said at parting:

"The duties of preceptor cease to-day. Henceforth we are companions and partners.

"Let us prove ourselves worthy of the trust placed in us. When this tour shall end we must arrange to spend a few weeks in southern Spain and visit the scenes so beautifully described by your favorite author, Irving."

The career of the two young men was one of almost uninterrupted success. The cities and towns in which they played offered ample opportunities for rest, sightseeing and education.

Carlos had come to Spain in quest of health and happiness. He found the former in the exercise of his own choice. As to happiness, he found it inasmuch as the performance of his duties, the remuneration of same, and the society of a boon companion could make it.

The Christmas holidays were spent, as per agreement, in southern Spain; but before they had come to a close he was approached with new propositions and offers. The game was in its glory in South America and Mexico.

A contract for two years, embracing exhibitions in these countries with a return each year to Spain, was held out to him with such alluring inducements that he decided to accept it. He did so, however, only after a long and serious consultation with Marcos, who had decided to retire from the game. He impressed upon Carlos the fact that a constant strain of five or six years, such as this game necessarily demanded, was as much as he cared to expend of his energies.

He had accumulated considerable, and his people, who were well-to-do, implored him to retire and settle down in life. "Besides," said he, "there is one whose orders I must now comply with. I have never told you of a dear senorita that is waiting for me in Seville; and I hope soon to share my life with her. So you see, if I am to lose a good friend in you, dear Carlos, I find one who has a long time held possession of the major

part of my heart; in fact, she owns it all, except the spot reserved for you, and which shall ever belong to you. The Damon and Pythias must part, but the bond of friendship must never be broken. When you return to Spain you must spend a time with us, where you will find not one, but two friends awaiting you."

With the advent of the new year, Carlos, who had bidden a fond and affectionate good-bye to his companion, took passage to Buenos Ayres, S. A.

The seasons in South America and Mexico were very successful, both to the management and himself.

On his return to Spain he made good his promise and was accorded a most welcome reception by Marcos and his wife, at their pretty home in renowned Seville.

A second tour through the same countries completed his engagement. He had contemplated following the example of his companion and retire at the end of this season. He intended to leave Spain once more and visit his own country.

Almost three years had passed, and during that time he had learned nothing of his father or of Ella and her people. She might be married and settled in some happy home of her own ere this. If such should prove true, then had he failed in one search. He had gone forth in quest of health and happiness. Health he found, even beyond his most sanguine hopes. One alone could bring him complete happiness. If on his arrival at home he would learn that Ella Wakefield had lived with that promised lasting remembrance for him, then would he strive with all the powers and means at his command to win her heart and hand.

He was busy adjusting matters at his friend's home, preparatory to leaving for America, when he received a communication that gave him much food for reflection.

The Great Euskal Jai Co., recently organized in the United States, had planned great undertakings. The best

players of two continents were being sought after. Unusual inducements were offered Carlos for a contract of one year. At first he was inclined to reject the offer; but on further reflection he saw it was but aiding him in his original plans. At the most, it meant a delay of one season only, and this to be spent on his native soil. He decided to show the communication to Marcos and seek his advice. His friend counseled him to accept and sign.

"Make it final, if you wish," said he; "but if I had the offer, situated as you now are, to be instrumental in furthering the interests of this great game and aid in presenting it as it should be played by adepts in my own country, nothing could hold me."

"Enough!" said Carlos. "I will accept the offer at once and prepare to leave next week."

"Some time in the not distant future I hope to visit you and yours again, and, my dear Marcos, if I come not alone, know you that I have but continued to follow your example."

"Ah!" smiled Marcos. "Have you also a secret unknown to me? If so, God speed you and lead you to her and happiness."

"I thank you sincerely for your kind words and wishes, but when I spoke I was only contemplating a possibility that the future might hold in store for me."

On the following Monday Carlos bid farewell to the Navarette family; Marcos, wife, and three months boy. Ten days later he set foot in New York. Once more he trod the soil of his native land. How great and grand it appeared to him! How near he was to those he hoped soon to see again! He had a week at his disposal and he would spend much of it in sightseeing. The newspapers had articles on the game and some of the players.

Among those of worthy mention he saw the name of Carlos Somar; he would read what they had to say of him. He was mentioned as one of the prominent players.

It was said of him that he was a native of America; born in one of the Western States of rich parents, who had sent him to the University of Madrid; but instead of devoting his time to classics he became enamored of the sport and followed it more through liking than as a means of livelihood. He learned further that he had won renown; played before kings, and that he had amassed great wealth and had decided to retire after this season, etc. He was amused at the manner in which these Yankee reporters could fill a column of reading matter partly with facts, partly by drawing on their imaginations.

On the second day in New York he sauntered into a large department store to make some purchases. While being fitted to a pair of gloves he chanced to look about at the throngs of people and the numerous salesmen and women.

Suddenly his attention rested on one of the saleswomen not far from where he stood. An exclamation escaped him. He stood as if rooted to the spot. "Yes," he soliloquized; "her bearing, her looks, those eyes!" Even her movements betrayed his girl friend, Ella Wakefield. But, he reflected, can it be possible? This must be a case of mistaken identity. Awaiting the return of his change he had opportunity to study her further. She was engaged showing some lace to a well-dressed woman and was unconscious of Carlos' scrutiny. As he passed near her he looked again and became so convinced that he was strongly tempted to abide his chance and speak to her. Yet he might be mistaken, and such an act would certainly prove embarrassing to both.

That night Carlos sought quiet and rest in vain. He entered a theatre in hopes of distraction. The play did not interest him. He retired to his hotel, but sleep could not be had. He lay awake, formulating plans how to gain an interview. At last he thought of one that was worth a trial at least. He would look for her at the close of

business and follow her in hopes of learning something definite.

The next evening he took up a position where he could see the salespeople coming out, yet not attract attention to himself. He had not long to wait when he was rewarded by the appearance of the young lady, who hastily wended her way through the great crowd, bent only on reaching her destination without delay.

Truly this was Ella Wakefield. Her every movement said as much. Following at a distance near enough to not lose sight of her in the crowds, he soon saw her turn to the left on one of the streets that crossed the city from east to west.

Here he could follow to better advantage, and crossing to the opposite side, continued in the same direction. Midway in the block she entered a rather pretentious house which Carlos concluded, from its resemblance to so many others on the street, to be a boarding-house.

He continued to the end of the block, crossed the street, and debated as to his next move. Slowly he retraced his steps until he reached the house into which he saw the young lady enter. Ascending the steps, he rang the bell, which was answered by a young man in livery. Carlos asked if there were any rooms to be had, as he was attracted by the card on the door. The young man answered: "At present there are not; but in a few days we will have a very choice room, as the lady and her daughter now occupying it are about to leave for the country."

"Can you let me know positively when I may call, as at present I am stopping at a hotel, but would prefer a room in a quiet neighborhood."

"Step in," said the young man, "and I will inquire." He left Carlos in the hall, and going to a door that led off to a side room, he knocked.

To an elderly lady that appeared in response, the young man said: "Mrs. White, here is a party looking for a room.

He is willing to wait a few days. Can you say when Mrs. Wakefield and daughter intend leaving?"

At last! Carlos had all the information he wanted. The elderly lady, coming forward, said: "I am sorry I cannot accommodate you, sir. I thought I would have a room to spare, but now the parties inform me they will not leave for two weeks. In fact, I do not like to lose them, but as the mother's health is not the best, she thought a change of air would do her good. However, if you are not suited in the meantime, you may find a room here to your liking and one I can recommend." Thanking her, Carlos bowed himself out, promising to call later if he made no change in the interim.

"Well!" he reasoned; "it is Ella after all, and her mother, too. What can have brought them to New York? And what of John Wakefield? Can it be that they are in reduced circumstances and the daughter is supporting the mother? Oh! If such be the case, what has my father to answer for?" He would learn more of those two persons during the next few days. He must not lose sight of them for any length of time. He had not accidentally found Ella to lose her again. He must find ways and means of meeting mother and daughter and learn something of the past three years, possibly something of his father and Mountainside as well.

That night, alone in his room, while assorting his papers preparatory to writing to his Spanish friends, his eyes chanced upon the contract he had signed two weeks previous and which he had not since read. He would do so now to refresh his memory.

It bound him to play in the city that numbered among its millions one that was both near and dear to him.

"A good idea!" he said, speaking aloud, though there was no one present. Immediately he began writing, but not to his friends in Spain, for now they must wait. When

he had finished he took up the letter and read it over to his satisfaction.

Taking three tickets from his pocket, he enclosed them with the letter and addressed it to Mrs. Wakefield, No. —— West 23d Street.

The next morning Mrs. Wakefield was handed the following letter; it being the first she had received since her advent to New York City:

"Dear Madam: The enclosed tickets are at your disposal as well as for your daughter. The writer sincerely wishes you to make use of them. They are, as you will see, admissions to the opening fetes of the Euskal Jai Company, where you will find excellent entertainment and have the pleasure of seeing many ladies and gentlemen of New York's best society. Reasons I cannot now explain, but which at some future time I shall, necessitate the omission of my name. This may savor of unconventionality, but I ask you to suspend criticism. If you could realize the great favor you would confer by attending the performance and exhibition, I am convinced no further pleading would be necessary.

"With best wishes for your welfare and that of your daughter, I am, Respectfully, A Sincere Friend."

CHAPTER IX.

If the receipt of a letter was a surprise to Mrs. Wakefield, the contents of this one were doubly so. She re-read the letter, then the announcement on the tickets, and placing them in a drawer of the small secretary, abided the home-coming of Ella. After their evening meal, the mother said: "I have a surprise for you, Ella," and handed her the letter. The girl read the letter, examined the tickets and looked at her mother for a solution.

"I am as much at a loss to explain as you are, my child. They are certainly intended for us. No mistake of name or address."

"Shall we go, mother? The writer, whoever he may be, desires it and will consider it a great favor. I say he, because this is evidently a man's bold script." After a moment's silence the girl continued: "Let us go, mother! They are for next Monday; I will then have my new dress you are finishing, and you know we have had absolutely no diversion since we came to New York, and you have attended no amusement since father died. Here is an occasion to drive dull care away for an evening, and I am curious to see some of New York's society, as well as to grant the favor asked, though we do not know the donor. What do you say?"

"I know not what to answer, Ella. But if you desire it, we may ask Mr. Allan if he has no engagement for Monday night. I hear him at the piano downstairs." In reply to her question, Mr. Allan said: "I intended to procure a ticket to-morrow, if possible, for myself. I was told there were few to be had and the speculators were demanding extra prices. Here you come and not only offer an admission, but the pleasure of your company and that of Miss Wakefield as well. I shall most certainly be pleased to accompany you and consider the privilege a favor."

The matter having been arranged, mother and daughter began preparations. Many were their surmises and guesses, but little did they think the sender was one who had long since been considered as lost. Monday evening was a most delightful one. The building began to fill early. This was to be a novel treat to many New Yorkers. Visitors to Spain and Cuba had seen the sport, and they were the enthusiastic ones before the exhibition began.

On entering the "fronton" each was handed a souvenir, in the shape of an elegantly bound journal, which

contained a list of the players engaged, as well as their pictures and a brief history of their various careers. Then followed the rules of the game with explanations. Here was something to entertain the audience before the contest began and during the intermissions. Ella was delighted to find that the seats they were ushered to were among the best. The view was perfect. A survey of the audience proved what the writer had said.

Here were assembled people of note, fashionably dressed ladies and gentlemen, and undoubtedly a number of New York's best society. Taking up her program, she studied the pictures and sketched the history of some of the players. The description of one who was to take part to-night interested her in particular. She read on in silence so completely absorbed in the description that she did not hear her mother speak when calling her attention to a particularly pretty hat and costume worn by a lady near them.

Finally Ella turned to her mother and said: "Here are the rules of the game, mother; if you don't mind I will read them to you while you can feast your eyes on the people. We have ten minutes or more to spare." Mr. Allan thought it a good idea. "We may as well learn something of the game so as to be able to appreciate what is in store; for I have heard this is to be a revelation to the uninitiated."

In modulated voice Ella began:

"OFFICIAL RULES AND EXPLANATION OF 'EUSKAL JAI,'

"OF THE GAME.

"Rule 1. The Spanish game of 'pelota' is here presented to the American public under the name of 'Euskal Jai'; Euskal being the dialect name of the provinces of

northern Spain where the game first attained its present perfection; Jai (pronounced hi) meaning a fete.

"OF THE PLAYERS.

"Rule 2. The number of players that may take part in a game varies from two (2) to six (6), and are distinguished by the color of their uniforms or costumes. Ex.: Red and white, blue and white, maroon and white, etc.

"Rule 3. 'Singles' are played by one (1) against one (1).

"Rule 4. 'Doubles' are played by two (2) against two (2) or two (2) against three (3).

"Rule 5. Sometimes, but very rarely, do three (3) play against three (3).

"OF THE BUILDING AND COURT.

"Rule 6. The building in which the game is played is called 'the fronton'; it is built in the form of a rectangle and divided into two parts, viz.: (a) The court, which is set apart for the players and judges, (b) the space allotted to the spectators.

"Rule 7. The court is subdivided into two parts as follows: (a) 'The cancha,' (b) 'the contracancha.'

"Rule 8. The cancha is a rectangle approximately 200 feet long by 35 feet wide, set apart for the game.

"Rule 9. The contracancha corresponds in length with the cancha, but is approximately 25 feet in width; it separates the cancha from the space allotted to the spectators and is reserved for the judges of the game; it shall be an even surface, but unpaved.

"Rule 10. The cancha is bounded on three sides by high, intact walls, built of solid material, the surface of which must be very smooth and even.

"Rule 11. The walls of the cancha are named as follows: (a) Frontis (front), (b) pared (side), (c) rebote (back).

"Rule 12. The floor of the cancha must be an even surface paved or concreted.

"Rule 13. The cancha is divided into spaces about 10 feet in width, which spaces are extended by perpendicular lines on the 'pared' (side wall) to a height of about six (6) feet and are numbered consecutively 1, 2, 3, etc.

"Rule 14. The spaces 4 and 7 mark the foul and fair lines within which the ball must fall in its first rebound after each service. Ex.: Should the ball in its first return from the frontis after being served fall in front of space No. 4, it is foul, and scores a point for the side or player opposing the server. Should it fall behind space No. 7, the server shall have a second trial; but if it should again fall beyond space No. 7 it is foul and a point is scored for the player or side opposing the server.

"Rule 15. The walls surrounding the cancha are marked by metallic bars that bound the space within which the ball, to be fair, must strike while in play.

"Rule 16. (a) The frontis (front wall) is bounded by three (3) of these bars, two of which are parallel to the floor, the first at about one yard therefrom; the second forms the top boundary; the third is perpendicular and extends from the edge of the frontis at the right to the upper bar.

"(b) The pared (side wall) has only one bar; it is horizontal and must correspond with and join the top bar of the frontis.

"(c) The rebote (back wall) has two bars; one corresponding with and joining the top bar of the frontis and pared; and one perpendicular and extends from the edge of the rebote at the right, to the upper bar.

"Rule 17. When the ball strikes one of these bars, or is driven outside the space bounded by them, it is foul, and a point is scored to the credit of the opposing player or side.

"OF THE BALL AND CHISTERA.

"Rule 18. The standard ball weighs about 120 grams and is made of India rubber, thread and leather, in the following proportions: From 85 per cent. to 90 per cent. is pure India rubber, the remainder is made of thread, and the whole is bound and protected by a double covering of leather.

"Rule 19. These balls are classified, according to make, into (a) lively, (b) semi-lively, (c) dead.

"Rule 20. The management shall provide all balls, being careful to secure such only as are alike in all details for each separate game.

"Rule 21. The number of balls to be used during a game shall be determined by the management, which shall, however, place double the number so determined at the selection of the players, from which number each side shall select one-half.

"Rule 22. The balls so provided and selected shall be subject to examination by the judges, who may reject one or all if in their judgment they fail to meet all requirements.

"Rule 23. The 'chistera' or 'cesta' is made of willow wicker and resembles a sickle in shape, to which a glove is attached for the right hand, and the whole is fastened to the wrist by a tape or ribbon.

"Rule 24. Each player must possess several chisteras and when presenting himself for play should have at least three (3) in good condition.

"Rule 25. The chisteras, like the balls, are subject to the inspection and approval of the judges, who shall have the power to reject any they may find lacking in the proper requirements.

"OF THE DUTIES OF THE MANAGEMENT.

"Rule 26. It shall be the duty of the managers to se-

cure players, determine the number and kind of matches or games to be played, as well as the number of points that shall constitute a complete game.

"Rule 27. They shall provide a physician whose duty it will be to examine and inquire into the health and physical condition of each player before or during the game, should circumstances require it.

"Rule 28. They shall provide necessary attendants, and a sufficient number of balls, which must be of standard manufacture and conform to all requirements.

"Rule 29. They shall provide a scoreboard whereon an exact state of the game at all times during the play shall be exhibited.

"Rule 30. They shall provide proper accommodations to the spectators and see that order and propriety are maintained.

'Rule 31. They shall be empowered to impose fines upon any player who may wilfully be guilty of infractions of any of the rules, for breach of contract, for failure to report at time ordered, or for reporting in unfit condition.

"Rule 32. They shall choose and appoint the judges or referees for each game and notify them of such appointments in due time.

"OF THE JUDGES AND THEIR DUTIES.

"Rule 33. The judges or referees shall be three (3) in number, to be chosen as follows: one (1) from each side of the teams or clubs from which the players are chosen for the contest; and one (1) from an independent team, or team not engaged in the contest taking place. These judges shall be chosen from the oldest or best players, and their selection shall be made by the management, who shall notify them of their appointment in due time. They shall take the following places: one at the line No. 4; one at the line No. 7, and one between, and shall watch closely every play that is made.

"Rule 34. The judges shall decide all points of the game and from their decisions there shall be no redress, unless such decision should be in violation of any of the rules herein set down.

"Rule 35. They shall be required to enforce each section of the rules and have power to inflict penalties for the violations of the rules by the players; such fines or penalties to be prescribed by the management.

"Rule 36. They shall determine the recesses or intermissions during a game as well as the duration of said intermissions, which, however, shall at no one time exceed four (4) minutes, except in case of an accident to a player, when the time may be prolonged.

"OF THE DUTIES OF THE PLAYERS.

"Rule 37. It shall be the duty of the players to report to the management, as well as to the judges, at least one hour before the time set for a game in which they are to take part, and to report for practice and selection of balls at least 15 minutes prior to the beginning of the game.

"Rule 38. If unable through sickness or accident to take part in the game to which he has been assigned, the player shall give due notice to the management. Any failure to do so, and which should be the cause of delay in selecting or procuring a fit substitute shall subject such player to a fine of not less than $20 or more than $100, which shall be paid by him to the management or deducted from his salary.

"Rule 39. The players must have no intercourse with the spectators during the game or its intermissions.

"Rule 40. During the game a player who may have occasion to call the attention of the judges to some fault or particular play shall do so by using the word 'pido' (meaning request), addressing it to the judge selected from his club, who will submit the question to the other judges. Their decision will be rendered without any

delay to the game and exhibited by the score. The player calling 'pido' cannot under any condition cease play. If the decision be in his favor it will show in the score, if not it has been ignored by the judges.

"Rule 41. Any appeal by a player must be made at the instant a play calls for it, the decision being left to a majority of the judges.

"Rule 42. The players are named: 'Zaguero' (back player) and 'Delantero' (front player, or server). The direction of the match may be trusted to either one, according to ability and experience.

"OF THE BALL IN PLAY.

"Rule 43. At the time scheduled to begin play, the manager shall call the servers to him and toss a coin into the air; the player winning the toss shall start the game by putting the ball in play.

"Rule 44. When the ball is in play it must be kept within the boundaries of the cancha; should it fall outside the cancha, a point shall be scored against the player or side making it; should the ball, however, after bounding within the cancha, go beyond, it shall constitute a proper play.

"Rule 45. If the ball be not caught after the first bound on the cancha, a point shall be scored against the player failing, as the ball must not bound twice on the same throw or service.

"Rule 46. Any player retaining the ball while in play, or changing his position with the ball in his possession, shall be cause for decision of the judges.

"Rule 47. In case of sickness or an accident during a game the physician aided by the judges shall determine whether the game shall proceed or not. A player failing to abide by such decision shall be fined not less than $20 nor more than $100. During such examination and con-

sultation the players shall remain in the cancha until a decision has been reached and communicated to them.

"Rule 48. To the player designated as server shall be confided the selection of balls. He shall, each time a new ball is brought into play, submit it to the zaguero of the opposing side for his approval. Should he fail to do this before serving the ball he shall be compelled to start again.

"Rule 49. When starting a game, as well as at each new service, the server having the ball shall bound it to the floor on the spot designated; should he not comply with this rule or fail to catch the ball on the first bound, a point will be scored against him or his side.

"Rule 50. If a ball while in play touches a player, a point will be scored against such player. Likewise, if a player drops his cap or any part of his uniform and the ball while in play touches said article, a point shall be scored against him or his side.

"Rule 51. When a thrown ball strikes a player before it reaches the wall the judges shall decide which side shall score a point, as such throw or service may be intentional."

Scarcely had she finished when four players stepped into the court. Their costumes, the long tapering basket-like appendages to their hands, their sparkling eyes and muscular limbs claimed the attention of all. They were awarded a cheering welcome, and before a reasonable opportunity had been offered to study or inspect them the signal was given and the great game of pelota was being played before an American audience in an American city.

As Mr. Allan said, the game proved a revelation, especially to those who had never witnessed it. The players were well matched. The two in blue soon captivated the spectators. They seemed to have the advantage, but it was short-lived. The whites, as they were called, from the

color of their costumes, gradually gained what they had lost and when time was called they were declared the victors, having scored thirty points to their adversaries' twenty-seven. The contest was rapid and it was seen that these players were possessed of wonderful powers of endurance, and displayed agility and skill that could have been acquired only through long and severe training and many well-fought contests.

After an intermission of ten minutes, two more players stepped into the court beautifully costumed; one in white and one in maroon. A casual glance would have satisfied even a novice that these were experts. They were announced as the winners at various times of decorations, and both had received honors from His Royal Highness, the King of Spain.

"Mother," said Ella, "I pin my faith to the one in maroon."

"Very well," said her mother; "I rather fancy the white."

"If my choice wins, mother, I want a rose from your bouquet. If your white wins you shall have the finest carnation I have to bestow upon the victor. What say you?"

"Why, Ella," said her mother, "you are being carried away like the vast majority of those present; but I am happy to see you so interested and know you are enjoying yourself; your color is so much better to-night, but I fear if you should give way to the general excitement I shall have to nurse a sick child back to reason and health. So please curb your anxiety."

"Fear not, mother," said the girl; "if I forget myself," turning to Mr. Allan, "please remind me."

The latter smiled: "I am against you, Miss Wakefield, for, like your mother, I rather like the looks of the one in white." Ella heeded him not, for at that moment her

gaze was met by her champion, who smiled and slightly bowed, as he turned at sound of the gong.

If the spectators were surprised at the ingenuity and dexterity of the participants in the first contest, they were unprepared for the wonderful display of artistic skill and cleverness of these two masters of the game. Such lightning strokes, delivered with a regularity and expertness, were astounding, and kept the onlookers keyed to intense excitement. First one and then the other had the advantage, yet at no time was there a greater difference than two points.

The player in white had scored 19, the one in maroon, and who was known to the assembly as Carlos Somar, of American birth, had reached 17 only, yet he seemed to be the favorite from the start, and was applauded at each particularly good play. It was after one of these executions that he inadvertently looked up in acknowledgment. At that moment, an unusually swift return of the ball, which he did not appear to expect, proved unfortunate, as he received a most painful blow near the heart. He reeled and in all probability would have fallen had not an attendant rushed to his aid. Play was suspended pending an investigation. The throng that had been applauding and cheering suddenly became quiet and interested in the injured player.

"I fear your champion has met with a severe accident, Ella," said Mrs. Wakefield. The girl replied not, but as she leaned forward it was noticed she was very pale. "Shall we leave, child?" asked the mother.

"Not yet, mother; he is reviving. I pray he is not seriously injured."

Carlos advanced to the judges, and replacing the basket with another, he once more stepped to the court. The entire assemblage gave him a hearty and prolonged reception. He bowed again, and looking directly at Ella smiled as he saw how enthusiastically she was clapping.

The play now stood 20 to 17 in favor of the white. At the signal the ball flew away as if shot from a rifle. The rapidity of the plays was even greater than before. Carlos seemed a different person. Determination was pictured on his countenance and his execution of marvelous and hitherto unseen plays instantly dispelled any doubts as to his supremacy. Point after point he scored. Not another did he allow his opponent. The beholders cheered and applauded as they had never done before. Carlos Somar was once more a hero. This time in his own land and in the presence of Ella. He picked the rose thrown him, and gracefully carrying it to his lips, wafted back a kiss that filled the girl's heart with joy. She knew she was recognized and she was proud of her hero. "Well, mother," said she, "what think you of my choice now?"

CHAPTER X.

After reaching home that night, mother and daughter admitted they had had a most enjoyable time. "I have long since given up trying to guess to whom we are indebted," said Mrs. Wakefield, "but I suppose we will know some time. When I think how lively you were this evening, and reflect how quiet you have been since we started for home, I fear the excitement was too much for you, Ella. You scarcely ventured a word to me or Mr. Allan in the cars. And you look pale. Are you indisposed, my child?"

"Not at all, mother; but I, too, have been thinking real hard. Let me show you something," and taking the program she opened it and pointing to the portrait of Carlos Somar, asked:

"Do you perceive a resemblance to anyone you know?"

After a moment's study the mother replied: "There is

something familiar about the eyes and general appearance, yet I cannot place him."

Pointing to the name, the girl said: "I knew him at sight, though he has grown a mustache, and looks so much stronger and handsomer in his acquired health. Just spell that name backwards and look at the picture again."

The mother complied and instantly recognized in the hero of the evening the long lost Charles Ramos. She, too, grew pale: "When did you discover this, Ella?"

"The moment he appeared. I had seen the picture and read of him before the game began. I thought then I had found the solution to our puzzle; when he stepped to the court I was sure of it, and knew who sent us the letter and invitations. But how he has learned of us and why he devotes his life to this sport when his father died so recently is a mystery to me," said the girl.

"He can have no knowledge of this, Ella. It was said he had written only once since he left home, yet it does seem strange he has not noticed the inquiries made for him since his father's demise. However, it is growing late. Let us try to forget the day's happenings and get some rest, or I fear you will be unable to report for duty to-morrow."

The following evening Mrs. Wakefield was informed by the maid that a young gentleman whose card she was handed begged to see her and her daughter for a few moments. Mrs. Wakefield looked at the card and handed it to her daughter. "Tell him," said she to the maid, "that we will be down in a moment. Well! I suppose there is nothing else to do, Ella; but do compose yourself, child; you are shaking like a leaf, and are looking pale. Here is your opportunity to solve the mystery and thank the young man for his kindness."

The calmness of her mother gave the girl courage; but she ventured: "Do you think I should go down, mother? Can you not see him alone?"

"On the contrary, he asked for us both, and both must go; so cheer up, Ella. You spoke so well of him and publicly gave him my rose at the fronton, why do you fear him now? Besides, I will not be guilty of unkindness at a time when we may be of some service to the young man."

"Lead on, mother, I follow," said the daughter.

The young man stood before a painting and seemed absorbed in the scene, when he was attracted by their entrance. Hastily turning and advancing, he met them with hands outstretched.

"Mrs. Wakefield and daughter! I am overjoyed to see and meet you both. This is a pleasure I dared not promise myself. I should have announced my coming or written to ask permission, but, really, I could wait no longer. I trust I am not trespassing?"

"Not at all, Mr. Ramos," said Mrs. Wakefield. "On the contrary, we are delighted to see you and know you are among the living. We surmised that you were lost completely, as the inquiries regularly appearing were unanswered."

"Inquiries for me?" asked Charles. "That is news, indeed. This is the first time I have set foot in the United States since I left three years ago. But now you have wakened my curiosity. I am anxious to learn something of my home and you; and if you can find the time to tell me, I shall be at a loss to thank you. I suppose the parlor is a sort of public reception room, and if you have no engagement will you favor me with a stroll so that we can talk and avoid interruption?" Turning to Ella and pointing to the rose he carried on his coat, he said: "I wish to thank you, Miss Wakefield, for your gift last night; you see how I have treasured it. No applause or greeting was as sweet."

"You flatter," said the girl, "and show that you have acquired some of the traits of people of foreign lands; but if you say so, mother, we can carry out our intention

in company with Mr. Ramos, as we were just about to take a walk. While we are going for our wraps, said Ella, "you can read this, and learn something," saying which, she handed Charles a clipping.

This is what he read: "Personal information is wanted of the whereabouts of one Charles Ramos, age 23, who left Colorado three years ago for Spain. The recent death of his father and the unsettled state of affairs necessitates his home-coming at once. Any information will be generously rewarded. James Stillwell, Mountainside, Colo."

When Mrs. Wakefield and Ella returned, they found the young man bowed in grief. When he looked up his eyes were moist and his voice trembled as he said: "This is sad news indeed. I shall have time to give way to my feelings when alone; but now, kind friends, I am with you and know that I am to be treated to a brief happiness—the only real joy I have had since I left good friends in Spain, if I except the pleasure your presence afforded me last night. Let us go. The air will do us good." Walking between them to the corner, he hailed a cab and told them to enter. To the driver he said: "To Fairmont; and choose the asphalted streets and park," and closing the door he took a seat opposite mother and daughter.

"This is unexpected, Mr. Ramos," said the mother, "and I fear an imposition on our part. Let the ride be a short one, since you did not consult us!"

"It will be too short for me, dear friends." And looking once more at the clipping, he put it in his pocket with the question to Ella: "Tell me, Miss Wakefield, under what date did this notice appear?"

"I think it was about two weeks ago, but it was not the first; I should say you will find that your father is dead since three months at least. I suppose you will reply in person, Charles—Mr. Ramos."

"You have said it; I shall arrange to-morrow to leave as soon as possible, and as you accidentally called me by

the name I was ever known to you and yours, please do me the favor to always speak to me as of old." The girl blushed. Then, turning to Mrs. Wakefield, he said: "Tell me of yourselves. How came you to New York and what of your good husband?"

They acquainted Charles with what had taken place since his leaving Mountainside. How they came to Chicago and later learned of the discovery of gold on Mr. Ramos' property. How Ella's father, meeting with an accident in the elevator, lingered for weeks and finally succumbed. "He really pined away," said Ella, "after learning of your father's fortune. He was not envious, and the only thing he ever said in our hearing was: 'He is lucky! I unlucky; but I am happy with a good wife and child, and would not barter my happiness for his wealth. I don't think he knows much peace.' That was all we ever heard, but we know he suffered."

Mrs. Wakefield added: "We collected an insurance of $500 six months ago, and with what Ella has made, first as a private tutor in Chicago, later at her present place here, and I with my needle, we have lived, and, thank God, have some to spare."

Charles sighed. They were riding through the park. The moon shone brightly, and he said: "Now, I will not worry you with my past history; I may do so at some other time if you permit. It is a long and varied career I have had and may possibly interest you, but I cannot relate my experiences to-night. My soul is sad to think what you and yours have suffered at the hands of a Ramos. I have one consolation, however. When I left home I made a resolution. I have lived up to it so far, and I trust ere long to see it carried out to completion. You are curious, I am sure, to know how I found you."

"That has puzzled us ever so much," said Ella. "Tell us!"

"Well, it was an accident. Last Wednesday I entered

a store to make some purchases. I saw you, Ella. For fear of a mistake I came the day following, watched you leave, followed you to the house you are stopping at, made inquiry, and, by accident again, became convinced that the friend of my boyhood's days, one who promised a lasting remembrance of me, was in the city," saying which, he drew forth a faded note and asked if she recognized it. She answered:

"You certainly have not lost it, I see."

Then, as if inspired, he said to Mrs. Wakefield: "To-day I learned I am an orphan. I lost my mother at the age of five. I have really never known a mother's love or care. What the future may have in store for me I know not. You tell me I am rich. I care not for that. During my three years abroad I have saved considerable, more than I may need for a long time. Money alone cannot buy happiness. If I had a mother to whom I could turn for advice I would not fear the future." For a time he was silent, as if fearing to give further vent to his thoughts.

Conquering his timidity, he looked straight at Ella's mother and said: "Mrs. Wakefield, will *you* be a mother to me?" The question was asked with an earnestness that left no doubt of its sincerity. The woman was dumfounded. Recovering quickly, she answered:

"What you ask may appear impossible. Yet I can assure you I would be happy and proud to have a son like Charles Ramos." He grasped her hand and imprinted a fervent kiss thereon.

"Henceforth," said he, "my life shall not be an empty dream."

The coachman announced their destination. "Let us view the river by moonlight from the verandah where we can enjoy a light collation and then return." Handing the driver a bill, he said: "Wait for us here; we will soon return." Carlos was happy; his order was served without

delay, and soon they were journeying to the heart of the city again; he, to his hotel; they, to their boarding-house.

On entering the park he broke forth anew: "I know that I have found a treasure; I now have a mother. You have a son of whom you know little; but I assure you he promises to be such an one as will ever strive to make you happy. I will soon leave for the West, only to return with plans that I hope will be for the good of all." Then, turning to the daughter, he said: "Do not think for a moment, Ella, that I purpose to rob you of any share of a mother's love. Her heart is generous enough for two. But as I have met complete success in my late endeavors, especially to-night, I am moved to tempt Dame Luck anew. If the promise you once made of a lasting remembrance be as good to-night as when you penned it to me three years ago, then seal it in your mother's presence. Ella Wakefield, I ask your hand and heart."

The girl looked to her mother for aid. Mrs. Wakefield answered: "Charles, this is rather unexpected and, I fear, embarrassing to my daughter. This is a most serious matter and should not be treated lightly or in haste. I would advise that you carry out your intentions to visit your home and settle matters there. You may then regret any step taken in haste. As a mother I can advise, you know. Do not press the question further at present. Am I not right, child?" This was addressed to Ella.

"You are always right, mother," said the girl. Then, turning to Charles and smiling happily, she said: "I had ever kept my promise until a famous hero by name Carlos Somar carried me captive. Charles here is my hand; Carlos Somar has my heart."

Once more Charles sealed the offering affectionately and added: "Carlos Somar it shall be until I am released by the Euskal Jai Company, which I promise will be soon. Then Charles Ramos shall again lay his offerings at the feet of the one girl he ever loved and who alone can bring

him that happiness he has been in quest of. I am contented beyond expression. I can journey home with a heart fortified to meet all trials, and when I return, how pleased will I be to say to you, 'Ella, the ore you discovered belongs to you and your mother!'" They parted, these three; happy in a union that was to last for many years.

That night he sent a telegram to Jim to the effect that he had seen the personal for the first time that day. He would arrange to leave New York on the morrow and proceed to Mountainside without delay.

Saturday morning he got out at the station and surprised the keeper with "Hello, Dan! Don't you know me? And you here, too, Nero?" Dan grasped his hand and welcomed him back and informed him of the news contained in the papers of the day previous. There being no one at the station, as he was not expected till night, Charles took Nero with him and started in direction of his home.

The change there as well as in all the neighborhood surprised him. He was not long in obtaining full account of all things since he left them three years before.

The main shaft of the mine was sunk at the spot where Ella Wakefield had accidentally turned up the sod and laid bare the ore with her parasol. Three days later Charles wrote to Ella and her mother, imploring them to come on without delay, as he felt the want of their aid and counsel and promised to have their old home in condition for them by the time they would arrive. He concluded with a word of Nero. "Poor old fellow! He was so pleased to see me! He follows me everywhere. I believe he understood me when I told him you were coming back to Mountainside. I am writing to-day to the Euskal Jai Company asking a release from my contract. I will be willing to purchase it if necessary, as I find that

matters are in such state here that I will be compelled to devote all my time and attention to the business."

Eight months after Charles Ramos set foot in Mountainside he decided that as he had applied himself so diligently and constantly to placing the various industries in good condition, he was in need of a change and rest. He had been successful in his efforts to win Ella, and his happiness was unbounded. All Mountainside was preparing for the wedding, which was to take place June 1st. It was to mark a holiday, and gladly did the settlers and prospectors strive to outdo each other in manifestations of their feelings and good wishes.

Two weeks previous Charles wrote to his friend Marcos in Seville:

"At last! I am able to carry out my desire expressed to you when I bid you and family good-bye last August. I will soon leave Mountainside to visit you. I found health in your beautiful Spain, but real and true happiness was to be had only in my own dear land. I have acquired it, Marcos, through union with the love of my boyhood's days. She, too, wishes to meet you and yours, of whom I never tire to tell, and to visit the land that gave me health and prepared my way to happiness."

THE END.

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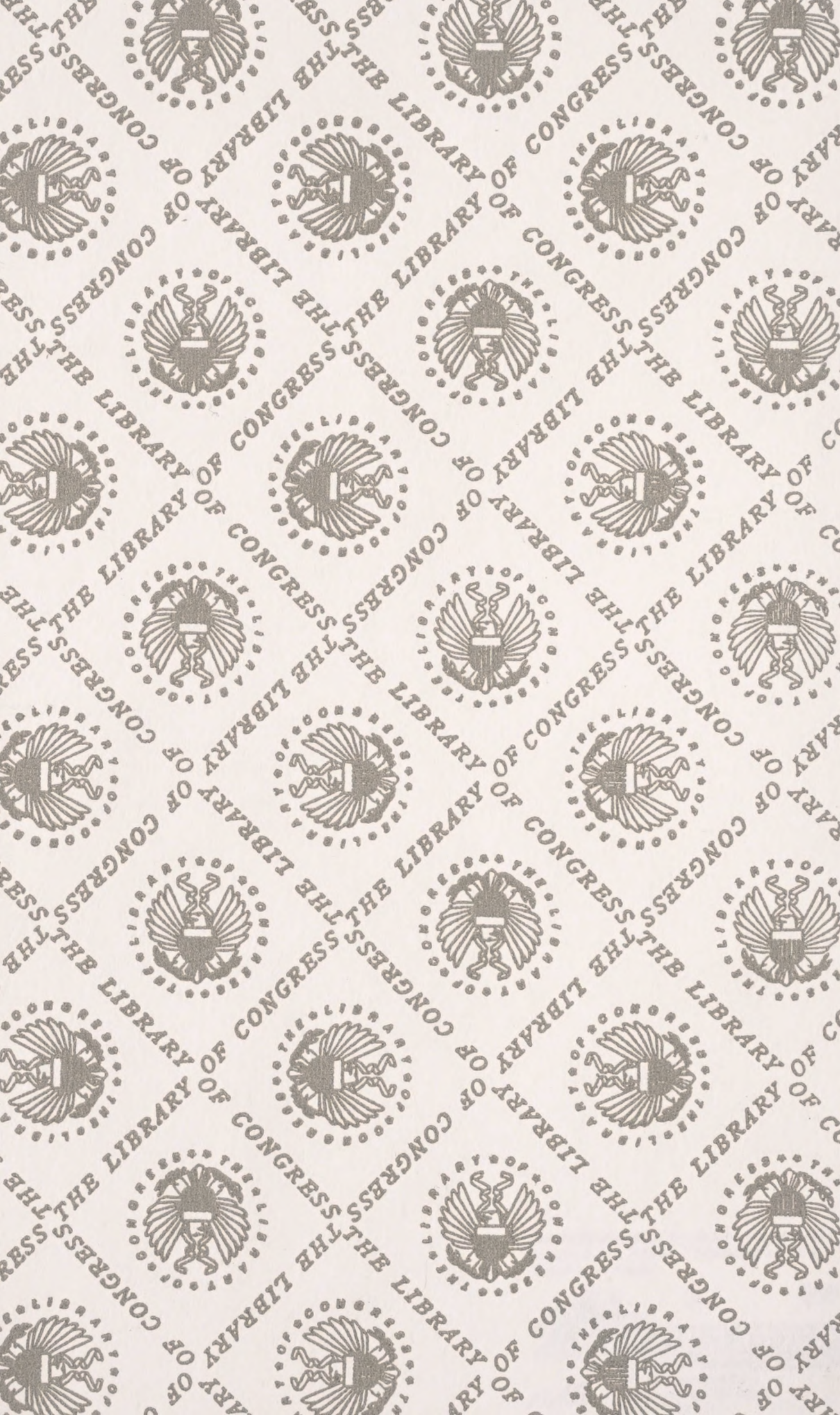
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